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DEVOTED TO THE ADVANCEMENT AND MYSTICAL ENLIGHTENMENT OF MAN

THE CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION

The Essene - Gnostic "Chrestian Ekklesia"



CLASSIFIED

THE CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION

ITS HISTORY AND TEACHING

Since the publication of "The Nag Hammadi Library" and Qumran Scrolls much interest has been directed to the study of the early "Gnostic" Church. It can be proved that the present organised church, called Christian, was brought into being at The Council of Nicea, circa 325 AD, and that it persecuted and invented false propaganda against those groups who were classified as "Gnostic". This has led to a situation wherein that which is termed "Gnosticism" is frowned upon and not considered "Christian" and sincere seekers have been turned away by believing that this teaching is something to be avoided when in fact it might contain the very answers to life that they have been seeking.

The Church of the Ascension came into being in the understanding that many Christians could not harmonise themselves with the existing Gnostic terminologies. The present Bishop therefore decided to drop the use of outmoded Gnostic language and to interpret the well-known Christian doctrines in the light of the ancient Gnostic truths (the Ancient Wisdom) and break down the many misunderstandings in an attempt to prove that the true Gnosis does, in fact, supplement the popular Christian doctrines by allowing those who believe these to delve more deeply into the mystical and cosmic aspects of the Christ teachings. By not imposing restrictive dogmas upon its members, The Church of the Ascension can enjoy an acceptance of the basic Christian doctrines from many different points of view. It allows a free enquiry into the doctrines of reincarnation, angels, psychic phenomena and many other subjects and, when viewed in the light of the Gnosis, assures one that the great Father-Mother Parent of mankind allows a free approach to truth within the bounds of the existing cosmic principles.

Let us now look back into the history of the Church of the Ancient Wisdom which has carefully guarded the "Mysteries" of life. Here we will quote from the writings of the late Richard Duc de Palatine, an initiate of several inner orders, who introduced The Pre-Nicene Catholic Church in 1953, the

forerunner to The Church of the Ascension. We are sure that you will discover that this history is as fascinating as the mysteries themselves.

"Our sacred Records show that when Atlantis sank in 9564 BC much of this science was lost to the survivors. When our Superior Ancestors (known to the Apostolic Church as the "Angels" who were pilots of "luminous vessels") came to rehabilitate the earth again, they instituted the Rite of Sacrifice, after the various myths had been allowed to gain prevalence. This rite conveyed the nature of matter and form (in one respect matter and form concerns the knowledge of the mortal and immortal nature of man) to a select number of persons who became the Priests, or Guardians of the Great Secret of Man. It was known that before any great event was to take place, the Priests performed the Ritual of Sacrifice and embodied the intention of directional prayer to the "gods" or forces to obey them. During the centuries the rubrics or structure of the Rite of Sacrifice has never changed, although the Gnosis of the matter and form may have been altered, but the Rubrics have never changed.

"When the Chrestians of the Mysteries of Serapis and Christos in AD 44, sought to change their name from Chrestian to that of Christian, the Right of Succession was broken. Similarly, when the new Christian Nicaean Church took over the panoply of the Pagan Mysteries, they accepted the Pagan Rite of Sacrifice and renamed it the "Eucharista". They retained the Matter and Form in its shell form, while the names of the Septenary and Zodiacal Rulers were changed into those of the Apostles, whereas the Gnosis that would have made it operational, was driven out of the Church! From 787 AD the Ritual of Sacrifice has never changed in its Christian form. The power and authority to perform the Rite of Sacrifice is called "The Right of Succession". It was Iranaeus and Eusebius who renamed it "Ordination" and became known in the Church dogma as the "Apostolic Succession" which succession is claimed for the Christian Church by Tertullian of the 3rd Century AD when he says, "Have you an Apostolic Succession? Unfold the line of your Bishops".

"Such a claim is verified by the statement of St Matthew, 21:23, "By what authority dost thou these things, and who gave thee this authority" to perform the ancient Rite of Succession. It could not be Jesus, since there is no historical record verifying his existence. There is not one word in the Four Gospels to claim that Jesus founded a Church, or that he gave instruction for the institution of the "Apostolic Succession". The only records in existence within the Vatican, Constantinople, Alexandria and the London Museum state that the "Right of Succession" came into the Apostolic Church from the Gnostic Doctors, sometime during the Second Century AD. The Roman records under Hadrian

states that the Gnostics and Chrestians were known as "Bishops of Serapis and Christos" and had been in existence from about 355 BC, and were the Episcopi of the Mysteries of Serapis, whom Ptolemy, King of Egypt, called the old Mysteries of Osiris and Isis. The five Gnostics who were definitely named are, Marcion of Rome, Valentinus of Alexandria, Basilides of Constantinople, Bardesanes of Edessa in South Russia, and Joseph of Arimathea of Avalon, England. Charlemagne of the 8th century revived the Order of the Knights of the Pactio Secreta and its Gnostic/Chrestian Lines of Succession.

"We say that unless a man is initiated or ordained by an Episcopi or Hierophant, who was himself initiated and consecrated by an Episcopi, and so on, right back through the ages to an Hierophant who was initiated and consecrated by a Supreme Hierophant of the Mysteries, who in turn received his Right of Succession from the Mysteries of Atlantis he cannot be a true Episcopi. Herodotus, the Father of History, was shown by the Egyptian Priests 341 wooden figures of their Hierophants of Osiris. Ptolemy the 1st Hierophant of Egypt was present at the commencement of the Serapean Line of Succession.

"There are still records in the Cairo Museum which show Ptolemy attended by the Hierophants of Osiris, consecrating the new Hierophant for Serapis and Christos. Also there is shown a picture of Ptolemy entering the newly completed Temple at Alexandria. We know that the many members of Serapis went to Antioch in Syria, and then spread into Galilee later, to act as the basis for the life and Action of Jeshu ben Pandira in 69 BC.

"G R S Mead in his work "Did Jesus Live 105 BC?" has shown with ample proof that Jeshu ben Pandira (105 to 71 BC) the prototype for Jesus of Nazareth, was initiated and raised to the Highest Degree of a Hierophant of the Mysteries of Serapis (Osiris) and Christos (Horus) in Egypt, and did, upon his return to Jerusalem, confer this initiation upon 12 of his followers with the Right of Succession. H P Blavatskaya and Gerald Massey have also brought forth irrefutable evidences that Jesus lived a century before his Gospel time. According to the Jewish Talmud, Jeshu was the original person who was transformed into Jesus of Nazareth. There is also ample evidence to show that all the Christian (sic) Bishops, were originally Bishops of Serapis and Christos up to the Council of Nicaea of AD 325, after which the Christians claimed to have received their Right of Succession from Jesus. But, we ask, where is the evidence?"

Shock survey of Anglican bishops

LONDON: More than half of England's Anglican bishops say Christians are not obliged to believe that Jesus Christ was God, according to a survey published today.

The poll of 31 of England's 39 bishops shows that many of them think that Christ's miracles, the virgin birth and the resurrection might not have happened exactly as described in the Bible.

Only 11 of the bishops insisted that Christians must regard Christ as both God and man, while 19 said it was sufficient to regard Jesus as "God's supreme agent". One declined to give a definite opinion.

The poll was carried out by London Weekend Television's weekly religion show *Credo*, in which Professor David Jenkins, who has been appointed the next bishop of Durham in north-east England, caused a public furore in April by expressing doubts about basic Christian doctrines.

Professor Jenkins said he did not believe the virgin birth and resurrection were historical events.

Eleven senior churchmen have asked that his consecration, scheduled for July 6, be postponed until after a meeting of the General Synod of the Church of England later in July.

In the poll, 15 bishops said miracles in the New Testament were later additions to the story of Jesus.

A majority said Jesus came back from the dead, either as flesh and blood or as a spirit in human form. But nine said that the resurrection was a "series of experiences" after the death of Jesus that convinced his followers "He was alive among them".

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In another place in his writings Richard mentions that the early Gnostics recognised no central authority for the interpretation of the teachings, but that they followed the Serapean method of interpretation according to their personal mystical experiences. We follow this method today and therefore one can readily see that all mystical cryptograms, allegories and patterns are interchangeable in their meanings, and are only "tools" which the teacher uses to explain the hidden Truths.

To quote Richard again, he says:

"Just as the universe unfolds itself to the student in gradual stages, so does the student realise that he must unfold himself in the same gradual stages. It now dawns upon the mind of the student why his Instructor only reveals bit by bit, fragment by fragment, stage by stage, the essence of the True Religion. The Way of the Cross has now begun. He now knows that his beginning of the Quest was as a Hylic. As the Godhead begins to unfold itself, he becomes a Chrestes. At the moment of Crucifixion he becomes the Christos and finally at the Ascension he becomes the Hierophant of Life."

The following extracts contain the basic Gnostic Teachings and whilst the Duc de Palatine was Sovereign Grand Master of the "Pactio Secreta" the Church of the Ascension does not operate under its umbrella.

"Now, let us deal with the seven main principles which underlie the Christian/Gnostic philosophy and which also underlies the tenets and purpose of the "Knights of the Pactio Secreta." We immediately see how the Post-Constantinian Christians deliberately misrepresented the original sources of their doctrines, mainly those of Serapis of Alexandria in Egypt. In this we are not referring to 'a god' nor 'the god', but simply to the Great Naught which is the All, as used by Pythagoras and Plato. By using the prefixes of 'a' and 'the', we mentally conceive of God or Deity as being a personality and all that which it implies. Therefore, the following seven principles lie at the very foundations of all the known Mystery Religions and Mystic philosophies known to man.

1. We identify Deity with Nature and vice-versa. We cannot regard Deity as infinite, omnipresent, omnipotent or even omniscient and eternal unless Man, Nature, and all Creatures are but aspects of IT, and IT informs every atom in Nature and Man. This, in its intellectual concept, infers that Man and

Nature are Deity, and man has every right to designate himself as God within the body, since he (Christos) is the WORD MADE FLESH. Those who deride this very logical premise show how utterly devoid they are of any intuitional faculty. God or Deity are pure abstractions, and we treat them as so.

2. Therefore, we must use the indefinable term 'God' to explain that Essential Power which resides within our own Human Temple, and which at the same time resides within our Immortal Soul, who is the Giver and Protector of the human Soul within this normal and limited human Temple. In this we infer the Monad - the Self; the Soul - the three emanations of the Essential Self; and the human Soul - still a further emanation of the Monad within the body. These three aspects are relative in their ultimate sense, but conceptional in their divisional or fragmented sense, they are but the ONE manifesting in many and various ways in the World of Formation.
3. We state that Deity fragments Itself from its unity of being into the many and the many are dispersed or seminally infused into the forms of men. Since the ONE lives in the many and the many live in IT, naturally, this ancient doctrine demands from us the mental conception that Deity and Man are one and the same being. Without this absolute doctrine being accepted by the aspirant, then any effort TOWARDS IMMORTALITY will come to nothing. Deity in this respect is the Great Naught and only becomes 'Something' when its Unit is broken up into the many. This Unity is the UTOPIA, wherein we find the state or situation of Ideal Perfection. It is only when this original Utopian condition is broken up that we find the differentiation of Deity, and the parts scattered throughout the sphere of the cosmos, but still remaining in their ultimate essence One with Deity.
4. We further state that the Units or Monads were compelled through a series of emanations, to enter finally into the tomb of flesh, or beast-like bodies. These reside within the valley of living death (normal mortal bodies) in order that the units may realize their Deific Nature. In this conception of the Christian/Gnostic Philosophy, we note that Deity is the Undifferentiated One Essence, which must by necessity be fragmented or crucified into the man (human Souls) so that these manifold Souls may unfold their Deific Nature. This can only be possible by the Souls becoming embroiled in the manifold and various concerns and lures of this world acting through the senses of the body. Through these conditions the entombed part of the human Soul may seek to become realigned with the Essential Monad.
5. We state that this Essential Fragments of Deity hidden within man is the Divine Soul, of which the human Soul or mortal consciousness is the outward and visible representation or part of Deity crucified in matter. This Chresto/

Gnostic conception can be explained through the Alchemistic process: the elements are thrown into the human crucible of flesh, and are crucified or COOKED by the many processes until the rare substance is refined into its original pristine nature. In this we find the real meaning of the "Mass or Ritual of Sacrifice" of the Chresto/Gnostic Ekklesia, and the "Lost Word" of the Masons, bearing in mind that the words, Mass, Crucified, and Masso, have the same meaning.

6. We further state that ALL MEN or ADAM possess one of the Fragments of Deity through and via the Monad (Spiritual Self), which is reflected in the Divine Soul and which in turn is actual in the human Soul of corporeal man. This means that the Spirit, Soul and human Soul of man constitute the Whole Man. That this lowest aspect of Deity within the corporeal body - the human Soul is ever seeking to be restored to the ESSENTIAL WHOLE within Deity. Here we see the reasons why Pythagoras and Plato taught the Laws of Metrics, Geometry and Mathematics. To these philosophers these three laws represented the nature and operations of the Philosophical Trinity of Being, Metrics represents the Monad or Man, the Geometrical is the Divine aspect of man, while the Mathematical is the corporeal man. Of course, this was later transformed into the Trinity of the Christians which in essence means the same thing.

We further maintain that the Monad, Divine Soul and the human Soul have within its threefold aspect and constitution the Powers and Wisdom of Deity awaiting the time when the man within the tomb of flesh will turn from the manifold concerns and lures of this world of form and will seek to manifest this Wisdom in his daily life through personal effort.

7. We state that the ancient method or process whereby man, resident within the dark tenement of the corporeal body, can be restored to his Divine Reality or Cosmic Consciousness is known as the Way towards Immortality. This is a Discipline which has been followed and achieved by all the Mystics and Enlightened Philosophers of all ages, climes and nations in every country."

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ITS HISTORY AND TEACHING

Part 3

In order for us to impart the Gnosis to orthodox Christians the story of Jesus of the Gospels becomes a beautiful allegory depicting the story of the soul's journey through the experiences of test, trial and temptation - and through its resurrection into a new life until it arrives at the ascension - or the final rising above all earthly pain, suffering and discord. Joseph is the initiate who takes Mary, his divine inspiration, to awaken the Christhood, or child Jesus, within his own heart.

Some students have asked us about the inscription "Jesus Maria" to be found carved upon the wall of the Abbey ruins at Glastonbury. This inscription translated correctly means "Jesus, Saviour of the world" and indicates that the early Celtic Church in Britain knew the proper ciphers of the inner teaching for the attainment of Christhood. Britain, from pre-flood times, has been the repository for the true gnosis, the ancient wisdom, and the Church of the Ascension has carried its succession through from the Patriarchs of old and maintains the Cosmic Teachings intact even though they appear in varied forms. The "Mysteries of Life" are the dreams of the "alternative society" fulfilled in all human affairs. The Way of the Gnosis, holy wisdom, is the Way of Love and Compassion shown to all the creatures in the world. That is why it is hated by the world, because the Truth denies the world the right to exploit others for possession and power.

In the little book "The Church of the Illuminati" Richard writes, "History shows that there were two streams of the Wisdom Tradition deriving from Atlantis; the first migrating to Central Asia and then into India and the Chaldean Mysteries, the second from Atlantis to Egypt (Mysteries of Isis and Osiris) and then to Greece (Mysteries of Eleusis) then into Asia Minor (Mysteries of Attis and Adonis) which were blended with the Mysteries of Mithra and the Essenes. In B.C.120 to 70 Christ came to establish the "Mysteries of Jesus" which was a blend of all the earlier Mysteries. The successors of Christ were the Gnostics and the Essenes (Dead Sea Scrolls) from them came the Catholic Church which destroyed outwardly the Gnostic Movement in the 3rd Century".

For a reasonable enquiry into the Gnostic Church we recommend students to read "The Gnostic Gospels" by Elaine Pagels. The modern

Church of the Gnosis allows one to experience the journey of a soul into freedom - a soul which demands an answer from the God it is asked to follow; it is not bound by hard and fast creeds or a dogmatic theology that decrees that one is a "heretic" if one does not blindly follow the dogmas.

The mysteries in Britain have taken on many forms, for example, to quote the Duc de Palatine again, "Joseph of Arimathea represents the state of man before the Fall. The Cycle of Merlin and Arthur is the exoteric cycle, the Cycle of Gawain and Lancelot represent the esoteric and Percival and Galahad represent the Hidden Church. In this, the Soul becomes the abiding-place of the Divine Presence. The Castle of the Grail is the human temple of the Holy Spirit through the Soul and in the Gnostic Mass of the Holy Grail, the Celebrant is the Soul itself, 'a priest forever after the Order of Melchisedek'."

Where does our present authority come from ? "The present Grand Hierophant (that is - the late Richard, duc de Palatine) is also a Gnostic Bishop and claims an unbroken line of succession from the College of Antioch, which owed its existence to St Paul and he in turn claimed authority from Jesu Ben Pandira, who in turn was a Grand Hierophant of the Pleroma (the then Brotherhood and Order of the Pleroma), links twelve lines of the Apostolic Succession in his person. This constitutes the Sacerdotal Section."

The Pre-Nicene Church became the Sacerdotal Section for the above mentioned Order in which the present Presiding Bishop of the reformed Church of the Ascension was consecrated Auxiliary Bishop. Richard travelled to California and reformed the Sanctuary of the Gnosis and set up the Chrestian Ekklesia. Thus this Church carries on its rightful succession and is also used as a channel for the teachings of the ancient Sun Priest Kings - the Pre-flood Patriarchs.

In his writings on "The Chrestian Ekklesia" Richard goes on to say:

"Religious Turmoil Now and Then"

"It is interesting to note that even in this century the secular churches are losing their grip upon the imagination of the people, and instead of teaching the people the basic principles of the "Way of Life", they have taught them to become believers only. Now, the people are turning to modern "Mystery Cults" in the hope of salvation. The secular church uses fear to retain the obedience of the people, whereas the Mystery Cults use Hope for the same purpose. History does repeat itself.

"By the beginning of the 3rd Century, B.C. the Gods were thoroughly and finally discredited, and the people of the Mediterranean world were in a religious turmoil. Only the few were eligible to enter the many Mystery Schools, but the bulk of the people were left without any real guidance, and the social life became very harsh indeed. The time was ready for a change of direction, a return to the palmy days of the past when the Gods did walk amongst men and taught and guided them. The rituals used by the temples were purely perfunctory and

devoid of any philosophic background, but depended upon tradition and custom alone. The state of affairs prevailing in those days is akin to the situation now existing today.

"In 356 B.C., there was born to Phillip, King of Macedonia, a son of questionable parentage, Alexander. His mother was a priestess in the Temple, and when she married Phillip, she was big with child. He accepted the child as his son, owing to the prophecy that a Great King would be born in a palace where two crows would sit. The prophecy was fulfilled, the son was born, and he was given Aristotle to be his tutor. Phillip of Macedonia dreamed of a united Grecian Empire, with one culture, one religion, and the purification of the Mysteries.

"Alexander the Great

"Aristotle was an Initiate of the Mysteries of Bacchus of Eleusis and Thebes of Macedonia, and he encouraged Alexander through all his conquests in the principles of the Mysteries. Aristotle and the friends around Alexander soon realised that this was not an ordinary person, he was a God. Alexander eventually conquered all of Asia and then Egypt, and under the wise guidance of Aristotle, Alexander respected and protected the various fertility cults which existed in Asia, as being variations of the One religion from Atlantis. He ordered a new Mystery School to be set up at Alexandria in Egypt. It was called the Mysteries of Serapis, and again under the advice of Aristotle, he drew to Serapis the highest and most noble elements from all the Mysteries and embodied them in Serapis.

"The Hierophants of Ptah, Osiris, Isis, and Horus in Egypt hastened to link themselves with Serapis, and then Deified Alexandra, giving him the ancient titles of Office - Soter and Christos. Alexander was the first Initiate of Serapis, and passed through the grades of Chrestes, Chrestos, finally to become a Christos - a Just Man. By becoming an Initiate he made sure that the ancient Law regarding the archaic Ritual of Sacrifice was restored, and the Rubrics were purified of all the dross which had accumulated over the centuries. He restored the mysteries until the Rubrics of the Ritual of Sacrifice was the same in intent and form as it was some 7000 years before. He made sure that the archaic matter and form were strictly adhered to. So Serapis in Alexandria became the Greek centre of the Ancient Mysteries.

"Sons of the Sun - Servants of the Servants of God

"As we have mentioned before, each Mystery Cult and School claimed the Right of Succession derived from Atlantis before the deluge. As this Right was backed-up by the Right of Succession from Venus, the Emperors, Kings, Princes, and Hierophants and Priest-Bishops had every right to call themselves Sons of the Sun, since they were all initiated into their particular Office through the same Ritual. It was from Serapis that the Roman Popes and Bishops could claim the divine right of the Priesthood of Melchizedek - he who lived before

the Flood of 9564 B.C. This same right was also claimed by the Emperors or Kings of Europe, and for the same reason.

"We think it now becomes quite clear that the basis for all temporal and spiritual power and authority stems from this archaic Ritual of Sacrifice and the Rubrics combining matter and form. These alone granted a man the supreme right to become a God on earth, and at the same time an Agent of God on earth. His responsibility was to protect, teach and encourage the Earthly God to attain the stage of becoming a Divine God. Initiation or ordination means the same thing - the beginnings and finishings on the one hand, and on the other, the ritual links the candidate with God directly.

"This is the real and only meaning of the term for a King or Bishop, that he is a Servant of the Servants of God. He is given the power to be a servant, and through his initiation, consecration or coronation he is linked to the God. At the same time the God quickens his inner perceptions and assists to draw forth his latent powers to rule and guide the Children of God entrusted to his care. Now it will be seen, in our analysis of the conditions prevailing at the beginning of the 7th century B.C. when the secular priests separated from the Initiate Priests, the secular priests were not initiated and granted the Powers of God, but were simply nominated priests by the State. This same condition exists today among the Protestant Church who broke away from the Initiating Bishop of the Catholic Tradition."

Regarding the Priest King Melchisedek, it is interesting to note that the office assigned to him in the Western Mystery Tradition is akin to that given to the Kumaris in the East. In this light the Order of Melchisedek is no other than that Order of Sanat Kumara stemming from pre-flood times. Abraham (or a Brahmin) is seen as celebrating the Ritual of Sacrifice (the now known Mass) along with Melchisedek to whom he owed allegiance. This Melchizedek is given much importance in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in the books found at Nag Hammadi.

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There are those who scoff at the idea of "mysteries". If those who invented the atom bomb had understood Divine Law they would have been more cautious. If those who are now experimenting with biological processes could foresee the horrors they are able to bring about, understood the Sacred Science, they would approach life with reverence.

All human suffering, the horrors of war, deformed bodies and retarded mental states are brought into experience because humans believe that they know what is best for themselves.

If humans understood the "mysteries of life" they would know that all that which they seek is a process already waiting to be released from within.

The Prince Chief Adept
(Sovereign Order of the Solar Circle)

In just the same way as a transformation takes place in the life of a butterfly, so must a complete transformation take place in the life of the one following along "the way". Just as the butterfly lives no longer as a caterpillar or a chrysalis so must the disciple no longer think or act as a "mortal" but should begin to think and act in accordance with the concept of immortality. The real and immortal cannot be experienced whilst one accepts the reality of the transient and mortal experiences or the concepts of the average 'human' being. This can be achieved only by undergoing a strict discipline of re-programming one's whole mental outlook. In order to be "born again" one has to drop completely all the dross of the past and live anew with an entirely new concept of life and the universe. It is the church's responsibility to help you do this. The advanced techniques for helping the students were to be found only in the so-called "mystery schools". This church stemming from the traditional lines is able still to transmit the ancient secrets to the prepared candidate although, on the surface, we function as an ordinary institution.

Let us continue with more information from the pen of Richard:-

"Man - The Source of All Knowledge and Power

The Gnostic evolution of Man as the God Incarnate is for the serious student who desires to know and realise the mysteries of his own being and to know that he is one with the God of ALL. He thus seeks to awaken the latent spiritual powers that exist within himself as the God Incarnate that will change his whole life. This is the very essence and purpose of the True Religion which has existed from the very origin of the human race and is, therefore, the natural heritage of all people.

Thus, the mystical and occult knowledge, including all the known aspects of ESP, were possessed by the ancient Mystery Schools of Egypt, Greece, the Americas, and by the Druids of England. It is the same teaching which inspired Pythagoras, Plato, Socrates, Solon, Jesus, the Buddha, and the Great Gnostic Doctors of the first three centuries of the Chrestian era, including Marcion of Rome, Valentinius and Basilides of Alexandria, and Cerenthus. All of these represented the latter part of the Gnostic cycle which had begun with Pythagoras.

66 12

The Crestian Religion and Philosophy

Historical research reveals that the Chrestian Religion was divided into two streams of activity: (a) The Psychic and Occult sciences, referring to the science of the

Gnostic or Hermetic Sciences which are, and have been for untold ages, hidden from the vulgar mind. This condition exists for a very good reason. This knowledge would never be appreciated neither by certain of the selfish educated classes, who would misuse it for their own profit, and thus turn the True Religion into black magic, nor by the uneducated, who would not understand it.

(b) The Mystical Gnosis, that stream of Chrestian activity which seeks to achieve the object of the Psychic and Occult Sciences within man's own self here and now. Its adherents claimed, and still claim, that God is all things and that man being God Incarnate has all powers and faculties latent within him. That it is through a system of purification, moral and ethical discipline, that these powers shall become manifest within his personality.

The Influence of Serapis

From the time of Pythagoras to that of Proclus in the 6th Century A.D. (who was considered the last of the Chrestian and neo-Platonic philosophers) the power, influence and occult abilities of the Initiates really disturbed first Republican Rome and then Imperial Rome. The list of Initiates of Serapis and Mithra kept the cultures of Greece Rome and Egypt in a ferment with their discoveries and scientific thinking to such an extent that the various rulers tried to suppress them, but to no avail. Gibbon in his "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" clearly shows that the Initiates of Serapis and Mithra were the most cultured, advanced and ethical people in the Roman World.

Arthur Findlay in his "The Curse of Ignorance" could not but admit that the Initiates of Serapis and Mithra were the most advanced thinkers of the Classical World, he relates numerous instances where these initiates discovered many of the scientific foundations which are accepted today. They were masters of the occult sciences, the fore-runners of many of our recent scientific theories.

The Rise of Popular Gnosticism

It is considered by modern investigators of Gnosticism that this cult began in the latter part of the 1st Century A.D., and that it was an enemy of the Christian Religion according to the Ante-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church. To make this claim is historically unsound, since we now know that Gnosticism existed for centuries before the Religion of Christ became a world power under Constantine the Great after the Church Council of Nicaea, in 325 A.D.

We now know that the various popular Gnostics existing between the 1st to the 4th Century A.D., were first initiates of the Mysteries of Serapis, but, on becoming Hierophants, they began to teach their own version of the True Religion according to their own mystical experiences. The occult and mystical feats performed by these Chrestians astounded the Christian Fathers to such an extent that they feared them.

They were feared for their ability to perform wonders of all kinds, and were therefore considered to be pagan Magicians.

The Christians who followed Jesus (who in the original texts was referred to as "The Fisherman" - which term we intend to use in this article) resented the fact that their philosophical and mystics brothers could accomplish greater "miracles" than those recorded of their saviour by tradition alone. Hence the enmity between the Initiates of Serapis and Mithra and the followers of the Fisherman of Galilee. It was at Antioch that the followers of the Fisherman began to call their cult "Christian", hence the cleavage between the Chrestians of the True Religion and the Believers of Christ.

Chrest and Christ

All probationary pupils for the Mysteries of the True Religion were called "Chrestes", that is to say a Wanderer. Before the pupil was allowed to awaken his own innate Spiritual Powers he was obliged to pass through three stages that of the PURIFICATION of the whole personality, and then through a series of tests and trials to awaken the Christ (Soul) powers within himself. This led to the stage of becoming ILLUMINED, or overshadowed by his own Indwelling God. It was by the activation of his Divine Nature while still living a perfectly normal life in the world, that he gained control over the inner forces of Nature and finally became an ADEPT OF LIFE.

Once having passed through the Inner School, he gained proficiency in his new-found powers and became a Hierophant. He then had the right to initiate others into the same system which he himself had undergone and to give training and discipline to others. By becoming a MYSTAE or an ILLUMINED ADEPT OF LIFE, he granted to himself the power to see and relive the past, to understand the events of the present, and to foresee the events which are to come. He was then given the honoured title of being a CHRISTOS - he who becomes the Ever-Returning One - A MASTER AMONG MEN.

Transformation in 325AD

The original Chrestians had gained control over the forces in Nature by means of PISTIS or Practical Knowledge and Understanding of these Forces. They were therefore able to command the gods to obey them. It was the everlasting complaint of the followers of the Fisherman that they were unable to perform the miracles of the Chrestians. Thus began a period of persecution of the Chrestians by the latter-day Christians. And so was brought into being the vicious conflict between the believers in the Christos as the Divine and Immortal Soul and the believers in a Christ as a man in time.

In 325 A.D., Emperor Constantine called all the "bishops" of the Cult of the Fisherman to a Council at Nicaea. There he ordered the carnal Bishops to formulate a creed based upon a "history" of a Saviour personified by Jesus of Nazareth as the only Son of God. A few years later, when Constantine's orders had been carried out, he then

proceeded to destroy the Chrestians. The reason for this lies in the fact that the Chrestians, who followed the Gnostic Way of Life, believed that every man was a Son of God and that Jeshu the Fisherman was a JUST MAN who demonstrated the innate power of God within every human being.

For the Chrestians - the Christ was the mighty power of man's Soul, the embodiment of God on earth or within man's nature. For the Chrestians - Christ was the Hero-God and not a person. They believed that through a discipline of one's human nature it could become the earthly mirror of the God in earth, and that once he had been overshadowed by the Divine Soul, man could control all the mathematical and geometrical forces in Nature and perform all kinds of wonders.

The Christians of Nicaea and Antioch denied the possibility that man is a reflection of God on earth, and called the scientific results of the Chrestians the work of the Devil. They demanded of Constantine the destruction of the Chrestians as heretics who were attempting to pervert the Christian Religion. The Ante-Nicene Fathers of the new religion of Christ overlooked the fact that the Chrestians (commonly called Gnostics through ignorance) existed many centuries before the Christian Fathers. Therefore logically, one must call the Christians the heretics against the True Religion, the adherents of which were then known as Chrestians.

The Destruction of the True Religion

As soon as Constantine made the Christian Religion the RELIGIO LICTA of the Roman Empire, and after the Ante-Nicene Fathers had muzzled the original foundations of the Chrestian Cult, they destroyed everything pertaining to the True Religion. Adherents of the Chrestian Religion were ruthlessly sought out and destroyed. Great libraries were burned and a political religion - a Religion of Power, instead of a Religion of Wisdom - was made the key note for the next 1600 years.

The accumulated knowledge of the True Religion, accumulated over vast centuries of time, was destroyed by the Christians for fear that it would destroy the uniqueness of the Religion of Jesus after 325 AD Branches of the Ageless Truth which we now call ESP, Occultism, Spiritism, Psychology, Philosophy, Masonry, and science, were forbidden. The Light of the Gnosis as denominated by Pythagoras in the 6th Century BC was eliminated by the fanatic and ignorant Christians. From the 4th Century AD, the whole of Europe was overshadowed by a Dark Age of ignorance and gross superstition. Gone were the Centers of Wisdom. Mankind was forbidden to investigate the natural forces of nature and within himself. No man was permitted to follow the Star of his own Illumination. All people had to accept the Church and the Christian Bible as the only means of salvation."

In this Light, in our church, we are Chrestians first and Christian by result of our expressing the Son of God on earth. (Editor)

The Ritual of Sacrifice that is spoken of in these papers is no other than the present day ritual commonly called The Mass or Eucharist. In the Chrestian Ekklesia, however, in the United States of Amrcica this ritual still carries the original name and contains references to former Gnostic Saints and Teachers.

In the ritual practised in this church the common title is preferred as it consists of a modified form of the Ritual of Sacrifice more acceptable to a varied congregation. We do not practice this ritual in the belief that it is the only way to God-Realisation. We realise that there are groups with very practical awakening techniques but we still adhere to the ways we find effective in our work.

The Mass, to us, represents a very powerful personal visual drama of the movement of Cosmic Forces and Energies working in the lives of the disciples or devotees following the teaching. It represents the "sacrifice" of the Universal God, or Father-Mother Principle, continually supplying nourishment and spiritual sustenance to all that which It has brought forth from within Itself, and shares It's own Glory with all the "creatures" (or component parts of Itself) It emanates within the structure of Its own compound form - the "creation".

In order to experience the realisation of the continual Cosmic Process the disciple, in turn, has to "sacrifice" his own sense of the "illusion of isolated ego-identity" and to participate in this process in order that the "Kingdom of Heaven", or the Order of the Perfect Man (order of Melchisedek), or the Christos, be manifest on this planet. This two-way sacrifice is depicted in the ceremony of "the Mass". The wording and movements of the service act as a "text-book", or aid at this level which enables one to consolidate the understanding of being at one with the Universal Whole. Richard, Duc de Palatine writes, ".....each human Soul is a cell in the body of the One, and therefore, for the whole to be One, each cell must conquer the conditions which keep it apart from the One - God. Meaning in effect: God and Man are one and the same Being. Therefore, buried within the heart of each one of us, being a fragment of the Whole, is hidden the Lord of Divine Life, and He dwells there to guide, the Guardian which hath shined in our hearts. This Real Self abides within our Inner Shrine, patiently waiting for us to find Him and give recognition to His presence there, then, once recognising that we are a Divinity, we must do battle with the Ruler of the Body, conquer him and arise out of the sepulchre and ascend to our original Home."

"God is Love" writes St Paul, therefore all creation is the love of God in continual expression. Each individual must awaken this Divine Love within the heart (the Spiritual Centre or Shrine) to realise immortality. When this immortality has been realised one then becomes a Prince of Light within the Great Invisible Empire of Light and is a co-worker with God. The Church of the Ascension is an outer school belonging to this Empire which is also known as the Hidden Church.

In the small book "The Hidden Church of the Illuminati" Richard writes "This Hidden Church or Empire is governed in the same manner as the Kingdom of Great Britain is governed. You have the King and His Ministers of the various departments of Life, they are called the PRINCES OF LIGHT. Each Prince has under Him a descending ladder of Minor Officials, these being the Initiates ranging from the 1st Degree to the 4th degree. Each one of these Initiates has around him a smaller group of pupils whom he directs in the business of the King, they are known as the YOUNGER BROTHERS whilst the Initiates are the ELDER BROTHERS. Each Member of the Army owes complete obedience to the King of the Invisible Empire of Light.

The King rules two kingdoms, yet in reality the two kingdoms are but the life and form aspects of the one Kingdom of Light. So from age to age from the Invisible Church a great Prince of Light becomes an AMBASSADOR of the King and descends to earth to assume a mortal body in order to teach and help mankind along the Path of Light. These Princes have come to every civilisation and restated in the form and language suitable to the people of the Kingdom of Earth the age-old fact of his eventual restoration to his Spiritual Home.

In every century, seven of these Ambassadors descend to earth and are responsible for the quickening of the seven departments of man's earthly endeavours, they deal with: the LEADERSHIP, TEACHING, PHILOSOPHIC, THE ARTISAN, THE MYSTIC and the ORGANISATION aspects. Each Ambassador may be a pupil of a Master or an Initiate and it is his or her responsibility to sound the key-note for the new age, in the main these embodiments of the Light come silently and fulfil their task and then pass away before the majority of the people realise that God has walked amongst them and the great opportunity they have missed."

THE REBIRTH OF THE TRUE RELIGION

"It was due to the humanistic revival of art, literature, occultism and learning in Europe between the 14th and 16th Century, that western man began to question the foundations of the Christian religion, the religion of power, oppression and degradation of the Human Spirit. With this awakening of the human intellect and the desire for Truth, the power of both East and West aspects of the Catholic Church declined, and a new age of Wisdom and Spiritual Freedom became possible. The Christian religion has always stood for the privileged few: the bishops, priests, and monks, assisted by

the kings and a very corrupt aristocracy. Assisted by the gross superstition of the Church, the majority of the people were kept in abject poverty and ignorance.

THE EMERGENCE OF THE GNOSIS

The 15th Century saw the re-establishment of Centres of Learning and Wisdom. It saw the coming forth of the True Religion with its Gnostic Philosophy under the guise of the Knights Templar, the Fratres Lucis, the Rosicrucians, the Illuminati, Freemasonry and Theosophy. In spite of the proscriptions of the Catholic and Protestant Churches, the Higher Science of the Spirit gained in every century. The Mystics, the Alchemists, medicine, science, etc., became free to talk of and to publish their findings. From the 14th Century to the present-day we have seen the re-emergence of the True Religion under many forms, in spite of the efforts of the Established Christian Religion to stem the upsurge of the Wisdom of the Ages."

THE ARCANE DISCIPLINE

In all the Mysteries from archaic times, the central theme of the teachings was the Divine Nature of Man. The central fact was never changed from one century to the next, although the names and legends have been altered, the main theme is always the same, and unless an organisation embodies this central Doctrine, we know that they are not in line with the Esoteric Tradition of the Ages. The Secret Schools, that is to say, the Inner Schools beyond the public Mysteries of Egypt, Greece and Rome were neither fraternal nor political, nor were there ideals the same as modern Masonry or Rosicrucians. They were essentially philosophic and religious institutions, those who were admitted into the Secret Schools were consecrated to the service of the Hidden Church of the Illuminati (the Illumined Adepts and Men).

It is known that the Christian Mysteries were also known as the Disciplina Arcani (or the Arcane Discipline) from the 3rd century AD onwards. These mysteries have been preserved by the Church of the Ascension although updated to fill the needs of truth seekers today. For an introduction to the understanding of the nature of the Disciplina Arcani see "The Awe-Inspiring Rites of Initiation" by Edward Yarnold, S.J., St Paul Publications.

"To all these envoys of light of the one inner community was joined the most important of all agents, Christ Jesus himself, in the midst of time as a Priest-King after the Order of Melchizedek" (Karl von Eckhartshausen)

The true mysteries are the expression or explanation of the "things there are". The initiate desires, solely, to know "What is Truth?" One cannot indulge in the hypothesis of things as we believe or wish them to be. We firstly desire to know the answer to the question, "How is the Universe?" - honesty lies in accepting "Everything is how it is". The problem arises in the discovering of the Truth of a particular statement being True. It can be learned that Divine Love does not conform to any human pattern either morally, legally or politically and any attempt to fit It into these patterns shows a lack of understanding of Divine Laws.

The Principles of Life, Light and Love are not possessed by any one religion, teacher or group. That which constitutes the true nature of the Universe is fixed and constant. To understand this nature one has to live according to the precepts of those Elder Brethren who have strived before to learn of It and proved It in their lives by example.

The Dammapada which is the sacred book of the Buddhists says, "Those who abide in the world of right thought see truth in the real and untruth in the unreal. They arrive at Truth."

In the Bhagavad-Gita of the Hindus it is written, "When thy mind shall escape from this tangle of delusion, then thou shalt rise to indifference as to what has been heard and shall be heard."

The Tao Te King of the far eastern religions states, "The Tao of Heaven has no favourites. It gives to all good men without distinction."

In the Epistle to the Hebrews in the Christian Scriptures it is also written, "God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets."

The revered St. Augustine (AD 354-430) being one of the outstanding leaders of the Historic Church, but it is not commonly known that he stated that Christianity was the continuity of the Pagan mysteries, he said, "What is nowadays called the Christian religion was in existence among the ancient peoples and has continually existed from the very origin of the human race, until, Christ Himself having appeared, they began to designate as "Christian" the True Religion which had hitherto been in existence."

Jesus said, "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure hid in the field, which a man having found has hid, and for the joy of it goes and sells all whatever he has, and buys the field."

Men join orders of monks and spend many years in prayer and meditation and yet do not find what they seek. Many people belong to some sect or religion but still remain tossed to and fro by the unpleasant tides of suffering in the world.

The teachers of "true religion" dare to cut across all recognised forms of dogma and doctrine to announce that which is Truth, in the face of the long-standing organised bodies who refuse to accept new revelations and a widening awareness of spirituality.

Divine Knowledge comes only to him who dares to stand on his own feet and face the dazzling light of Truth. Truth is that which strips every vestige of human error from the disciple leaving his mortal vesture to the mercy of the consuming flame of Divine Love. Only by forfeiting one's mortal attachments can one attain immortality. Such is the nature of true religion which accounts for the continual rounds of wars, hunger and suffering still rife in a world with four, so-called, great religions - with Christianity claiming that it follows the "saviour of the world". He came two thousand years ago and the organisations who claim to follow him are still groping for answers. Few there be who find Truth for there are but few who are honest to themselves.

Does the Church of the Ascension teach the Doctrine of Reincarnation? We accept the remarks made by Richard, Duc de Palatine, in his little Book "You and Reincarnation" he says, "Every school which is based upon the Occult Philosophy or Gnosis of the Ages presents its own version of this controversial doctrine of Reincarnation. This, however, does not mean that the reader should accept any one of these before he has a chance to evaluate the other versions. Thus, when we speak of the Pleroma, we are referring to the whole range of human endeavour within the mortal and immortal spheres of man's life. all through the centuries great minds have pondered upon this question of man and his immortality. But owing to the great secrecy surrounding the Incarnation and Resurrection of the human soul within the Pleroma of life, very little practical knowledge is available to the Doctrine of Reincarnation.

"There is the claim that Reincarnation was not taught by the Christ who was humanised and personified after 325 AD. However, there is sufficient proof to show that Reincarnation was not taught to the common faithful, but was an esoteric doctrine taught to the Perfecti of the Christian era. But this doctrine of the great Christian Bishop Origen, of the second century, was declared heretical by Menas, Patriarch of Constantinople during a provincial synod in 543 AD, while the General Council did not

meet until ten years later. There is every evidence that the Doctrine of Reincarnation was never questioned by the Christian Church until then. Earlier it had always been accepted as a part of the Christian Revelation by the whole Church, of which Origen was a leading Bishop and exponent."

The view of the Church of the Ascension on all matters spiritual is that we maintain that the Holy Catholic Church of Christ embraces all that has ever been revealed to man for his enlightenment and search for Truth. In spite of the many facts about the early church coming to light (by archaeologist, the Qumran Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi Library) the established bodies still refuse to accept the true history of their beginnings. Therefore, whether or not we be viewed as heretical, we consider ourselves an essential part of the Modern Church and we are willing to co-operate with all churches, groups or societies engaged in the "spiritual" enlightenment of mankind.

The Keynote of every ceremony, discussion and meeting in the Church of the Ascension is Divine Love. "This Beauty, this Love," writes Richard, "This God which is imprisoned within the personality of man begins to awaken to his real Heritage, and in order to realise its own Beauty, the Divinity remains hidden in the secret recesses of the Soul of Man. The Kingdom of God and Beauty is not of this world of ever-changing forms, but for man to find this Kingdom he must advance inwards and upwards, penetrating into his own Sanctuary of Love. If man has the strength to accomplish this feat, he must close his eyes to the terrestrial things, he must realise that the things he sees and touches in the third dimension are simply images, traces and adumbrations of the Superior Self, that Self which is the one with the Soul of All-God."

When we have sought after every channel of the Scriptures, sought out many teachers, having entered the path of the mysteries, undergone every initiation - the Baptism of the Spirit, the trials and temptations of the wilderness, the death and resurrection of mortal pursuits and reached the final ascension, or mastery, over all earthly conditions - we arrive at the Kingdom of Love, Agape. "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels," writes St. Paul, "but have not love (agape) I am a noisy gong or a tinkling cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give my body to be burned, give away all I have, but have not Love, I gain nothing." Love being the final consummation of all things, because God verily is Love Itself, it is the only teacher and master of all the true Sons of God - the Hidden Church and the Kingdom of the Christ upon this planet and everywhere within the Cosmos.

The Kingdom of Heaven is not some wish to be fulfilled in the future. If it is an Eternal State it must already be here. This state of wholeness and Love Fulfilment is permanent within the heart of man. Man has only to give It expression and let Its Principles govern every action.

The Hidden Church is the "Pattern shown on the Mount". The manifestation of Perfect Expression. Heaven is always "at hand", always in evidence to those who know. It is forever near to protect and guide the faltering steps of an unbelieving society whose precepts are based upon the numerous inventions of the human mind.

"The original Gnosis was, and is, a system of self-knowledge wherein all aspects of human thought and endeavour are studied together. From this all-embracing approach to life, the Gnosis leads to a meaningfull life. "

"Therefore, let no reader think that we are detracting from the teachings of the Christian Jesus. Far from it. What we are trying to do is to reveal the original stratum of the Gnosis and the materialising process which took place after 325 AD. Once we are able to discard the carnal ideas which have been imposed upon the original teachings of the Nazarene, there is revealed to us a wonderful system of self-redemption and final ascension to our immortal estate."

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